



TRAVEL UPDATE

O C T O B E R 2 0 0 7

A Utah Department of Administrative Services, Division of Finance quarterly communication service

www.finance.utah.gov



Electronic Travel Reimbursement

Many state employees enjoy the ease and reliability of direct deposit for their paychecks. We are often asked whether or not travel reimbursements can also be directly deposited into their bank account. This article will answer that burning question.

Most state employee travel reimbursements are paid through the State's accounting system, FINET, instead of through the payroll system. This is done so travel reimbursements can be distributed in a timelier manner (i.e. you don't have to wait for a payday). For this reason, you may not receive the payment via direct deposit, even if you are set up for payroll direct deposit.

If you would like to have your FINET paid travel reimbursements direct deposited, all you need to do is fill out form FI 16A - [State of Utah Employee Electronic Funds Transfer Authorization Form \(Non-Payroll\)](#). This form is available online at <http://smw1.finance.utah.gov/eforms/> under the "Payables/Reimbursements" heading. The completed form may be emailed to or returned through interoffice mail to the Division of Finance, Attention: Fvendor, or you can fax it to (801) 538-3562. Of course, we always take measures to protect your confidential information.

If you have any questions about this process, you can reach us by e-mail at fvendor@utah.gov or by phone at (801) 538-3112 or (801) 538-3110.

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Policies and Procedures Announcements and Information

This section will now be found on page two of every Travel Update Newsletter. Here you will find information on any policy changes as well as information on policies that still raise a lot of questions.

Q.

When is it necessary to obtain approval from the Travel Office for a group gathering?

A.

If the agency selects a facility that offers per diem rates, then approval from State Travel is not required, regardless of the dollar amount spent.

If the agency is spending between \$1000 - \$5000 AND the facility they have selected does NOT offer per diem rates, the agency must get two, preferably three bids. If the agency is unable to obtain more than one bid then State Travel must approve the gathering.

If the total cost of the group gathering is \$5000 or more AND the facility selected by the agency does NOT offer per diem rates, then State Travel must approve the function.



Need a Passport?

New passport laws are now completely in effect. Passports are now required for all travel outside the USA including Canada and Mexico.

To obtain a passport for the first time, you need to go in person to a passport acceptance facility with two photographs of yourself, proof of U.S. citizenship and a valid form of photo identification such as a driver's license.

Acceptance facilities include many federal, state and probate courts, post offices, some public libraries and a number of county and municipal offices. There are also 13 regional passport agencies, and 1 Gateway City Agency, which serve customers who are traveling within 2 weeks (14 days) or who need foreign visas for travel. Appointments are required for such cases.

You will need to apply in person if:

- you are applying for a US passport for the first time
- your expired US passport is not in your possession
- your previous US passport has expired and was issued more than 15 years ago
- your previous US passport was issued when you were under age 16
- your currently valid U.S. passport has been lost or stolen

You can renew your passport by mail if:

- your most recent passport is available to submit and it is not damaged
- you received the passport within the past 15 years
- you were over age 16 when it was issued
- you still have the same name or can legally document your name change

(For more information about passport processing times, see <http://travel.state.gov/passport>)

**Visability is a local company that can help with all passport and visa needs.
You may visit www.visa-bility.com for details.**



Important Information for State of Utah Travelers



Our objective is to educate State of Utah employees and travel planners on how to efficiently request travel and how to achieve the best service possible. We want travelers and travel planners to understand information needed for a proper reservation; better understand airline policies and know where to find help regarding travel.

Location and office hours

We are located at 1170 State Office Building. Our office hours are Monday through Friday 8am - 5:00pm. We will take phone calls until 4:30pm. Best fares are available in the early am hours so please have requests in as early as possible. International requests must be in by 3:00pm to allow time to process and research. The best way to reach us is via email or by calling our main line at 538-3350. You may also look up our individual contact information at: <http://finance.utah.gov/travel>

Name requirements

Due to Airline policies and guidelines all reservations must be booked in the exact name that is listed on the travelers government issued identification. A government issued ID consists of a passport, driver's license, or a military identification card. Unfortunately, due to the FAA and 9/11 restrictions, we cannot issue tickets in a nickname or an abbreviated name. For example, Tom instead of Thomas would be considered incorrect and the passenger could be denied boarding.

Required information for a Reservation Request

The best way for our agents to be efficient and supply the best possible choices to you as a traveler or travel planner is to have specific information as follows:

- Name-traveler and travel planner
- Dates-departure and return
- Times- specific arrival or departure times help determine and narrow schedules
- Destination-specific city or airport if known
- Authorization numbers- Unit numbers, travel numbers, or credit card
- Contact information-phone and email
- Hotel and car rental information
- Check in/out dates
- Location
- Credit card guarantee
- Any specific requests or accommodations needed

Changes and cancellations

We have a 24 hour review policy on all issued and confirmed tickets. Please recheck and double check all itineraries that are emailed to the traveler and travel planner. We have a chance to void and reissue a ticket if changes need to be made as long as it falls within 24 hours of the original issue date. Name changes are not normally allowed. Please be specific on the name. In some circumstances we can get an airline waiver to make a name change.

The State Travel Office looks forward to working with all state and local government and higher education employees. We want to provide the best service possible. If you have any questions, please contact Tami Nelson in State Finance at 538-3109 or Dallas Stewart with Christopherson Business Travel at 538-3359. Also, please visit our website at <http://www.finance.utah.gov/travel>.



Motley Fool's Smart Advice on Agents

By Carol Eannarino



Score one (or two) more for travel agents as the trend toward agent-friendly consumer press coverage continues.

A July 31 Motley Fool online article, “Don’t Forget Travel Agents” by Selena Maranjian, advised readers that although some online travel sites are user-friendly, “relying on your own knowledge might not always be the best move.”

“A good travel agent really knows the world of travel, much better than we occasional voyagers do. A discussion with one can help you better shape a trip.”

Maranjian advised while readers may be able “to snag the best airfares online on your own, travel agents may be able to secure better deals for you with hotels and cruises, and sometimes even airfare,” thanks to the “special deals” offered to them.

Also, travel agents can “keep an eye on fares to see whether a fare you booked has fallen. If it does, the agent may be able to get you a refund on the difference you paid.”

The article cited “another bunch of advantages, from the folks at weddingchannel.com” for prospective brides planning a honeymoon, from help finding the “right destination for your personality and needs” and “up to the minute information on travel deals and places to avoid,” to making all the arrangements so that “you can spend more time planning your big day and less time stressing about travel details.”

As for finding a good agent, Maranjian advised readers to ask friends for recommendations and “eventually someone will offer a glowing” one.

She also pointed up the advantages of developing a “nice relationship with your agent.”

“Over time, a good agent will get to know you and your travel preferences and may be able to proactively recommend various trips and deals for you.”

Travel and Leisure Editor Lauds Agents

Another article, “Travel Agents Make a Comeback” in the Aug. 1 edition of cbsnews.com talked about the praise heaped on agents by Travel + Leisure’s deputy editor, Laura Begley, during an appearance on The Early Show.

“The thing with the Internet is there’s so much information, so much noise. It’s hard to know where to go for knowledge. And you really might not be saving money you think you are saving. There are fees with some of the sites,” she said.

While she noted agents are often associated with fees, Begley added that sometimes they can be worth it. A simple trip to Miami could be booked over the Internet, she said. But as soon as things become more complicated, travel agents can take over.

“They provide knowledge,” said Begley. “They can help set up complicated trips. They know about insider deals. They’ve got the connections that can really help you as a traveler.”

As for finding a suitable agent, she advised seeking out one “who specializes in the area you’re looking at.”

Reader feedback to the article was featured on the Web site and included these comments:

“I am tired of going through all the steps to book a flight on Travelocity only to have them tell me, on the final step, that the price has been changed. A travel agent will tell you the final price right up front and not waste your time.”

Another reader said, “If you examine consumer complaints, you will see that online travel agencies are one of the most often cited. Why would you want to spend thousands of dollars and not get the best possible advice?”



(For complete article see http://www.traveltrade.com/headline_news.jsp?articleID=8970)

Flight Delays at a Glance



This year we have seen a record number of flight delays and cancellations. Here in the State Travel Office, we strive to keep our travelers informed of the latest information. A recent study listed the top five cities with the best and worst on-time arrival performance. We are happy to say that the Salt Lake City international airport is in the top five for the best on-time performance. Here is a look at that top/bottom five list, according to the Federal Transportation Department:

The five airports with the **WORST** on-time arrival performance:

- New York’s LaGuardia international Airport at 57.6 percent
- New York’s John F. Kennedy International Airport at 58.7 percent
- Philadelphia International Airport at 61.3 percent
- New Jersey’s Newark Liberty International airport at 62 percent
- Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport at 62.3 percent

The five airports with the **BEST** on-time arrival performance:

- Houston Intercontinental Airport at 82 percent
- Salt Lake City International Airport at 80 percent
- California’s Oakland International Airport at 77.8 percent
- Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport at 77.5 percent
- San Diego International Airport at 77.4 percent

For the complete article, refer to www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21115807. You can also find current travel advisory information by visiting www.state.gov/travelandbusiness.



"The arrival of Flight 208 will be delayed. They've run into some beautiful weather and they're taking in the sights."



Who's Who in the State Travel Office

Tami Nelson (State Employee)
State Travel Manager
801-538-3109
taminelson@utah.gov

Lanea Blosser
Travel Consultant, Christopherson Travel
801-538-3103
lblosser@utah.gov

Dallas Stewart
Office Manager, Christopherson Travel
801-538-3359
dstewart@utah.gov

Denise Francis
Travel Consultant, Christopherson Travel
801-538-3358
dcowley@utah.gov

Tiffany Snowball
Travel Consultant, Christopherson Travel
801-538-3352
tsnowball@utah.gov

Diane Hawkes
Travel Consultant, Christopherson Travel
801-538-3351
dhawkes@utah.gov

Renee Craig-Jennett
Travel Consultant, Christopherson Travel
801-538-3743
rjennett@utah.gov



Carved your pumpkin yet?

HELP!

Emergency Line During Business Hours, 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday

801-537-9124

In-State Toll Free During Business Hours, 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday

800-358-1019

After Hours Emergency Hotline

866-489-9834

